

Remarks

Examiner Mathews is thanked for his time during teleconferences on March 29 and 30, 2004, to discuss the status of claims 30-31. The Examiner suggested that the double patenting rejection of claims 26-29 should have included claims 30-31. Applicants remarks below take this into account.

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of this amendment, Claims 1-31 are pending in the application, with 1, 10, 17, 24-26, and 30 being the independent claims. No new matter has been entered by any amendments.

Based on the above amendment and following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R §1.83(a) as not showing certain claimed features. Applicants submitted a Preliminary Amendment attaching four new figures and a Letter to the Draftsman attaching the four new figures upon filing of this application. The Preliminary Amendment added description to the Brief Description of the Drawings and to the Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments for FIGS. 11A-11D without adding any new matter. These figures and their description are supported by the original claims, were previously found not to be new matter in the parent application (09/599,383), which was incorporated by reference into the child application when originally filed, and appear in the patent (6,628,370) that issued from the parent application. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the objections.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

The Examiner rejected claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Although Applicants disagree with the Examiner's rejection, Applicants have amended paragraph [0043] to include text to

this limitation, which amendment is supported by the original claim 16. Based on this amendment, Applicants respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Rejections under the Judicially Created Obviousness Type Double Patenting

Claims 1, 2, 6-15, 17, 18, and 22-25 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting (“double patenting”) as being unpatentable over claims 1-10 of by U.S. Patent No. 6,259,513 to McCullough et al. (“McCullough”).

Claims 3, 4, 19, and 20 were rejected under double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-10 of McCullough in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,864,381 to Neal et al. (“Neal”).

Claims 5 and 21 were rejected under double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-10 of McCullough in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,714,218 to Nishia et al. (“Nishia”).

Claims 26-29 were rejected under double patenting as being unpatentable over Claims 1-3 of U.S. Patent No. 6,628,370 to McCullough et al. (“McCullough II”). Also, per the teleconference discussed above with Examiner Mathews, claims 30-31 stand rejected similarly to claims 26-29. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections.

Applicants have submitted a Terminal Disclaimer herewith in order to avoid the rejection and expedite prosecution. The Terminal Disclaimer avoids McCullough and McCullough II, and neither Neal or Nishia, either along or in combination, teach or suggest claims 1-31. Accordingly, based on the submission of the Terminal Disclaimer, Applicants respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these rejections.

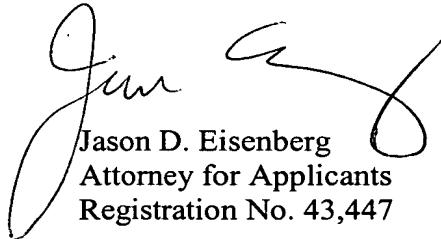
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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